

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAB-01 SAM-01 ACDA-19

DRC-01 SCCT-02 /164 W

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R 090631Z JUL 74

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INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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USUN NEW YORK 2654

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7837

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS XF

SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL MEETING

REF: CAIRO 4862 (NOTAL

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SUMMARY: RECENT ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL MEETING IN CAIRO

SEEMS TO HAVE WITNESSED SUCCESSFUL GOL EFFORT TO DEFLECT OFFERS OF UNWELCOME MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER ARAB STATES, BUT NOT TO HAVE PRODUCED ANY GREATER SUPPORT FOR LEBANESE NEED TO EXERT GREATER CONTROL OVER FEDAYEEN HERE. END SUMMARY.

1. GOL APPEARS PLEASED AND RELIEVED THAT ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL (ADC) MEETING IN CAIRO CAME AND WENT WITH NO UNWELCOME RESULTS. PM SOLH, WHO LED GOL DELEGATION, HAS PRONOUNCED ADC SESSION A "SUCCESS" AND EXPRESSED LOQUACIOUS APPRECIATION TO PARTICIPATING ARAB STATES FOR THEIR SUPPORT FOR LEBANON IN FACE OF ISRAELI ATTACKS. DESPITE RUMORS OF "SECRET RESOLUTIONS" ADOPTED IN CAIRO, WOULD SEEM THAT PROCEEDINGS CAME OUT PRETTY MUCH WHERE GOL HAD HOPED: I.E., CASTING LEBANON IN UNACCUSTOMED (ALBEIT FLATTERING) ROLE OF ARAB WORLD "STALWART"; DEFLECTING OFFERS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE--ESPECIALLY STATIONING OF ARAB FORCES ON LEBANESE SOIL; AND IMPROVING PROSPECTS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM RICHER ARAB STATES IN SUPPORT OF GOL'S ON-GOING DEFENSE PLANS (AND PERHAPS FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH).

2. PRESS ACCOUNTS HERE SUGGEST THAT GOL/PLO "SOLIDARITY", MUCH HERALDED ON CONFERENCE EVE, EITHER BROKE DOWN DURING PRIVATE ADC SESSIONS OR, AT MINIMUM, BEGAN TO COME APART IN WAKE OF ADC MEETING. ZOHAYR MUHSEN, SA'QA LEADER AND MEMBER OF PLO DELEGATION IN CAIRO, HAS PUBLICLY LABELLED ADC SESSIONS A FAILURE, " BECAUSE THE PARTY (LEBANON) FOR WHOSE SAKE MEETING WAS CONVENED DID NOT WANT ASSISTANCE." MUHSEN, WHOSE REMARKS APPEAR TO CONFLICT WITH THOSE MADE IN CAIRO BY FATAH'S FAROUQ QADDUMI (REFTEL, REPORTEDLY WAS DISTURBED BY GOL'S UNWILLINGNESS ACCEPT ARAB TROOPS AND BY LEBANESE OPPOSITION TO FEDAYEEN RECEIVING MORE ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS TO FORTIFY THEIR REFUGEE CAMP STRONGHOLDS. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH FEDAYEEN MAKE MUCH NOISE ABOUT STRENGTHENING CAMPS IN DEFENSE AGAINST FURTHER ISRAELI ATTACKS, GOL REGARDS SUCH MEASURES AS AIMED PRIMARILY AT IMPROVING FEDAYEEN MILITARY CAPABILITIES VIS-A-VIS LEBANESE ARMY. EVENTS OF MAY 1973 PROVED THAT GOL

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AIR POWER IS BIG STICK IN ANY ARMY CONFRONTATION WITH CAMP-BASED FEDAYEEN. END COMMENT)

3. MUHSEN'S COMMENTS PROBABLY REFLECT ATTITUDE OF MANY LOCAL PALESTINIANS AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS WHO SEE ADC AS UNWILLING OVERRULE GOL OBJECTIONS TO BEEFING UP FEDAYEEN PRESENCE IN LEBANON AND WHO ARE ALREADY SENSITIVE TO ARAB PRESSURES (REAL OR IMAGINED) ON PLO

TO ABSTAIN FROM CROSS-BORDER OPERATION IN ORDER SPRE
LEBANON FURTHER ISRAELI ATTACKS. WE THINK IT LIKELY THAT
CONSIDERABLE DISSATISFACTION WITH ADC OUTCOME WILL BE
AIED AT PLO EX COMM MEETINGS DUE TO BEGIN TODAY IN
DAMASCUS. WE FIND IT INTERESTING, IN THIS CONNECTION,
THAT BEIRUT DAILY ASH-SHARQ, WHICH GENERALLY REFLECTS
SARG VIEWS, HAS JOINED DAMASCUS MEDIA IN DECLARING ADC
CONFERENCE A "SUCCESS", "HAVING FULFILLED PURPOSE FOR
WHICH IT WAS CONVENED."

4. THOUGH ADC PROBABLY FELL SHORT OF ACHIEVING HOPES
CHERISHED BY CERTAIN GOL OFFICIALS OF EXERTING ARAB
PRESSURE ON FEDAYEEN TO CURTAIL THEIR LEBANESE-BASED
OPERATIONS, WOULD APPEAR THAT SYRA AND EGYPT ARE AT
LEAST NOT ENCOURAGING COMMANDOS TO DEFY GOL. MOREOVER,
IF SARG'S PUBLIC POSTURE, WHICH CONTRASTS SO MARKEDLY
WITH THAT OF ZOHAYR MUHSEN, IS ANY INDICATION, COULD BE
THT DAMASCUS IS PREPARED EXERT GREATER POSITIVE IN-
FLUENCE ON SA'IQA AS WELL. MEANWHILE, WITH LEBANESE
ATTENTION FULLY FOCUSED ON CELEBRATED KIDNAPPING OF
NAHAR EDITOR MICHEL ABU JAWDEH (SEPTELS), THERE IS
NO EVIDENCE THAT GOL EMERGED FROM ADC WITH ANY HEIGHTENED
CONFIDENCE IN ITS OWN ABILITY TO EXERT GREATER CONTROL
OVER FEDAYEEN. GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BEIRUT07837
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740181-1118
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740766/aaaacesj.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: CAIRO 4862 (NOTAL
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANALYSIS OF ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL MEETING
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MASS, XF, ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005